



**COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES**

November 19, 2020

Commissioners Present: Rachel Champagne, Dr. Michael Gollub, Stan Mantooth, Dr. Robert Levin, Kelly Long, Barbara Marquez-O'Neill, Dr. Cesar Morales, Bruce Stenslie, Barry Zimmerman

Excused Absence: none

Staff Present: Petra Puls, Lauren Arzu, Heather Davidson, Sharon Elmensdorp, Fahim Farag, Jimena Hernandez, Jennifer Johnson, Sam McCoy, Nani Oesterle

Public Present: Christina Alvarez, Jhoelle Aspuria, Elizabeth Hardin Boyett, Elizabeth Cervantes, Juana Chaparro, Carizma Chapman, Tiffany Charaabi, Camelia Cruz, Hope de Moss, Sandra Diaz, Shelby Ferns, Heather Garcia, Hilcia Garcia, Cynthia Gonzalez, Lilia Gurrola, Andrew Huizar, Breanna Monette, Blanca Morales, Mabel Munoz, Kelly Petrula, Veronica Reynoso, Erik Sternad, Megan Switzler, Margarita Valadez, Joelle Vessels

OPENING

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Marquez-O'Neill opened the meeting at 1:02 p.m., reminded attendees how to participate via public comment, and shared a quote.

2. Welcome Rachel Champagne, Senior Program Director for Catalyst Kids, as the New Commissioner Appointed by the Ventura County Local Planning Council

Chair Marquez-O'Neill shared Rachel's background and welcomed her to the Commission.

3. Approval of Minutes from October 22, 2020 Commission Meeting

A motion was made by Commissioner Gollub, seconded by Commissioner Long, to approve the minutes from the October 22, 2020 Commission Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Agenda Approval and Review of Commission Packets

Chair Marquez-O'Neill provided an overview of regular and supplemental packet items, noting materials were sent via email and are posted on the F5VC website.

A motion was made by Commissioner Mantooth, seconded by Commissioner Stenslie, to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Public Comments/Correspondence

Chair Marquez-O'Neill noted the public comment will be heard during the discussion of agenda item 10.

CONSENT AGENDA

6. Receive and File the First 5 Ventura County Financial Reports as of September 30, 2020

7. Recommendation to adopt a resolution per Government Code 54954(a) to establish time and place for holding regular Commission meetings for calendar year 2021

A motion was made by Commissioner Stenslie, seconded by Commissioner Long, to approve the consent agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

REGULAR AGENDA

8. Report of Committees

a. Administration and Finance Committee

Commissioner Mantooth noted that the Administration and Finance Committee approved this recommendation at the November meeting and asked Lauren Arzu to present the recommendation.

i. Recommendation to Grant Executive Director Authority to Enter into a Lease Agreement with Don Carlton Realty Company and Extend Current Office Lease for One Year

Lauren Arzu detailed the current lease for administrative office space, which expires December 31, 2020, and noted staff explored alternate office locations prior to transitioning to remote work in March 2020 due to COVID-19. Lauren reported that with staff able to maintain productivity while working remotely, management analyzed the costs and benefits of working remotely and determined that a smaller office blueprint would maintain functionality while reducing administrative costs. Staff recommend decreasing the total square footage rented by 1,600 by eliminating the second floor office space as of January 31, 2021. The proposal is to maintain the upstairs conference room, which would be relabeled to Suite 203 to maintain address continuity, and reconfigure downstairs with workstations such that any staff can access while in the office. Lauren detailed the one-year lease renewal proposal for the conference room and downstairs office space, including square footage costs for office space and storage, and noted this action would result in a cost savings of \$35,200 from February 1 – December 31, 2021. She added this renewal maintains the limitation on the annual rate increase and allows F5VC time to assess the effectiveness of working remotely without a long-term commitment for office space.

A motion was made by Commissioner Zimmerman, seconded by Commissioner Levin, to grant the Executive Director authority to enter into a lease agreement with Don Carlton Realty Company and extend current office lease for one year. The motion passed unanimously.

9. Review of FY 2019-20 Annual Accountability Report

Sam McCoy noted the Accountability Report aggregates data from First 5 Ventura County funded partners to measure the extent to which benchmark targets were reasonable, if the targets were met and, if not, why or how they may need to change.

Sam reviewed the data shared in the report, beginning with preschool. The Commission made a strategic decision to provide transitional preschool funding over two years to support scholarships and subsidized preschool spaces for families who don't qualify for or can't access state preschool. Sam noted there was little utilization of these spaces and discussed reasons for this outcome.

Sam reported on PACT class data, noting FY 2019-20 was the first year of implementation for the redesigned NfL initiative. Targets were developed intending to have four cohorts of unduplicated participants. While new participants were prioritized, about half of PACT families were interested in participating for multiple sessions, as indicated by the actual and unduplicated numbers served. Additionally, due to COVID-19 in-person services were stopped just prior to the third cohort starting in March. Staff are currently revising the way these benchmarks are captured moving forward. Sam reported that NfLs also provide health and developmental screenings and care coordination as needed. Similar to PACT, targets developed based on new quarterly participants were not met primarily due to COVID-19 and the returning families that did not receive duplicative screenings.

Sam reported that Triple P service targets were met, noting in addition to parent education many of the Triple services were able to be adapted to a virtual format that allowed services to continue through the pandemic. He also noted 211 targets for referrals to families with children ages 0-5 were met, with web searches almost doubling the expected target.

Sam concluded his report with a detail of virtual services provided by NfLs from March to June 2020, noting services contain an unknown amount of duplication due to the inability to remotely obtain client consent for evaluation.

10. Review and Assessment of Current Implementation of Ongoing Key Investments, and Discussion of FY 2021-23 Implementation Models: Neighborhoods for Learning

Petra Puls noted today's presentation is for discussion only and she and Sam McCoy will conduct the presentation jointly. In June 2020, the Commission adopted the FY 2020-22 Strategic Plan, with implementation planned for FY 2021-23. Over the course of this year, F5VC is transitioning to this new Strategic Plan and determining the optimal implementation. Petra recapped the implementation plan timeline as reviewed by the Commission in October 2020. She noted as funded partner contracts are set to end in June 2021, staff are reviewing all current investments for program effectiveness and fidelity.

Petra noted the NfLs were conceived over 20 years ago with our first Strategic Plan in 1999, and she has been involved with the NfLs since that time in her time with VCOE and F5VC. NfLs originally offered all types of services, such as yoga, swimming lessons, family support, and preschool. Recognizing a lack of services for children ages 0-3, NfLs developed and implemented the PACT program. Over time, F5VC worked with NfLs to standardize program offerings at all sites. Petra introduced Sam McCoy to detail the evolution of the PACT program.

Sam noted that the PACT classes are the cornerstone of NfLs and detailed how classes evolved over the years with 11 NfL contractors. He highlighted F5VC's work to standardize the PACT program including a standardized lesson plan template that can be adapted to the specific needs of diverse communities and families, and draw upon evidence-based materials and practices. Additionally, NfLs offer services such as health and development screenings, care coordination, and parent education, with PACT often serving as a point of entry.

Sam reviewed the NfL RfP process in 2018 and implementation models that were explored with the Commission at that time. During the process, Interface Children and Family Service (ICFS) was selected to implement F5VC's vision for the NfLs countywide with ongoing support from F5VC staff. However, while this structure seemed strong on paper, it has turned out to be problematic and contentious .

Sam noted that the NfL staff are excellent, appreciated and highly valued, but the structural barriers between the two organizations are fundamentally irreconcilable. NfL staff have a unique blend of training, covering the extent of our performance standards, and training in providing health and development screenings.

The current two-year contract with ICFS will end in June 2021, and Sam discussed the strengths and opportunities for F5VC to administer the NfLs. First 5 holds a unique position in the landscape of the ECE system, and has obtained several recent grants to expand PACT, incorporate Medi-Cal Administrative Activities (MAA billing) to offset costs, and participate in national ECE efforts.

As an organization with over 20 years of expertise and leadership in this field, and as the designers of the NfLs and PACT program, F5VC continues to learn from this model and innovate in a way that can only happen with direct oversight and participation, as we look to maintain fidelity to our model and represent the brand of our organization local, statewide and nationally. Sam discussed the improved quality of programming and flexibility that can be achieved by in house administration, including ongoing training and coaching. Sam noted that F5VC staff intend to recommend bringing the NfLs under internal administration as of July 1, 2021, shared a draft organizational chart, and discussed F5VC's commitment to retaining NfL direct services and managerial staff with the same structure as is currently being implemented.

Sam concluded that F5VC intends to maintain our level of investment, the staffing structure and will maintain the continuity of the service model, so that there will be no disruption of services for families or for the staff serving them. He asked Petra to present the timeline for next steps.

Petra reviewed the potential transition timeline and noted that with ICFS' partnership, we can transition staff from ICFS to F5VC seamlessly and avoid disruption for the families we serve. If the Commission approves the anticipated recommendation in December, F5VC is ready to move forward quickly to transition staff, work with parents and community partners, and achieve our vision for NfLs. NfLs are an integral part of the community that families and community providers rely on. Petra added F5VC recognizes the importance of communication with current NfL staff and noted a Zoom call is scheduled for November 20. She concluded staff feel this recommendation will enable the Commission to enhance F5VC's impact and achieve our vision for children and families.

Chair Marquez-O'Neill asked Erik Sternad to deliver his public comment. Erik noted that ICFS respectfully opposes the F5VC staff recommendation as he believes results could improve over coming

years if the partnership continues. Erik requested an opportunity for an open exchange of ideas to better understand pros and cons of renewing the contract. He noted we all want what is best for families and ICFS is pledged to do their best for families in the transition.

Commissioner Mantooth advised that in a perfect world it is best to have F5VC be in the driver's seat and operate the NfLs. He reminded the Commissioners that in 2018 F5VC wasn't prepared to make such a dramatic move and recognized ICFS for being the bridge between having had numerous NfL contracts and F5VC administration, should the recommendation be approved.

Commissioner Gollub commented that we make the best decisions with the information available at the time. We then reassess with the new information that is available. He thanked Erik for providing the transition and noted that if the Commission supports the change, it will be based on the best information available at this time.

Commissioner Morales requested that resource allocation and operational efficiency be included in the discussion. ICFS is a valuable partner for schools throughout Ventura County and they stepped up to provide continuity during transition. He also requested that the Commission receive information on whether deliverables were met.

Commissioner Stenslie appreciated the presentation and remembers reviewing the models presented in 2018. He noted F5VC administration may be the optimal model given staff capacity, budget, etc. and wants to review the budget, outcomes, and overall efficiency when considering the recommendation.

Chair Marquez-O'Neill thanked ICFS for their work, that the Mixteco community was included, and that the cultural component was incorporated. She added transitions are not always easy and it is important to review the data and capacity. The Commission must continue to do what is best for families and communities while maintaining transparency and honesty.

Commissioner Mantooth requested information on what the expectations were with ICFS, were they met, and what F5VC's commitment is to meeting the same expectations.

Chair Marquez-O'Neill asked the Commission to weigh in on whether a special Commission session should be scheduled. Commissioner Stenslie asked that we address the issue in the context of the regularly scheduled meeting, but allow ICFS to have some additional, but limited, time on the agenda. The other commissioners concurred.

11. Report from Executive Director

Petra Puls delivered highlights from her written report. F5VC transitioned to an online health insurance enrollment platform, eliminating significant paperwork. The total increase for health care coverage was 10%, less than the budgeted increase of 15%. F5VC is currently recruiting a Help Me Grow Care Coordinator, the job description and application information is available on the F5VC website. Petra joined the Commissioners in welcoming Rachel Champagne to the Commission.

Petra directed the Commission to the written update on NfLs, highlighting material distribution events for families. NfL staff were able to secure donations of pumpkins from Grocery Outlet in Oxnard and toothbrushes from Ventura County Public Health. She also reported HMGVC is partnering with VCOE

and MICOP to offer developmental screening trainings in Spanish. HMGVC also continues to contribute articles to the CHDP quarterly newsletter, with the most recent copy enclosed for reference.

The Funders Forum continues to meet twice a month to address the pandemic response and learn about a variety of topics, including racial justice in grantmaking in December. Petra thanked Chair Marquez-O'Neill for supporting the parent leaders who recently completed their COFI training and detailed the program led by F5VC staff member Jimena Hernandez.

Chair Marquez-O'Neill thanked the staff for allowing her to participate and shared how impressed she was by the content and the group's intention to develop a plan of next steps and goals.

Petra concluded her report by directing the Commission to the First 5 Association's transition memo submitted to the Biden-Harris transition team to emphasize the importance of prioritizing children and families, noting memos were drafted in preparation for either election outcome.

Commissioner Gollub asked about the HMG training being in Spanish instead of Mixteco. Sharon Elmensdorp reported that the staff F5VC trained are multi-lingual and translate the information they learned to Mixteco or Zapoteco when working with families. All trainings were provided in Spanish.

12. Commission Member Comments

Commissioner Long commented that F5AC Executive Director Melissa Stafford-Jones presented to CSAC to strengthen advocacy for young children. She thanked F5VC for the ability to advocate at the state level.

Commissioner Gollub expressed his appreciation for staff for their thorough and conscientious work.

Commissioner Mantooth again welcomed Rachel Champagne to the Commission and complemented her on expertise in and passion for early childhood.

13. Next Meeting

Thursday, December 17, 2020, at 1:00 p.m. via Zoom.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:27 p.m.